

Washington State Conservation Commission Regular Meeting

**FINAL MINUTES**

Pasco, Washington  
March 18, 2010

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The Washington State Conservation Commission (Commission/WSCC) met in regular session on March 18, 2010 in Pasco, Washington. Commissioner Bahrych called the meeting to order at 8:37 a.m.

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**ATTENDEES**

Lynn Bahrych, Chair  
Fred Colvin, Vice Chair  
Jim Peters, Member  
Lynn Brown, Member  
Tracy Eriksen, Member  
Josh Baldi, Member  
Lee Faulconer, Member  
John Winder, Member  
Clay Sprague, Member  
Chris Herron, Member

**COMMISSION STAFF**

Mark Clark, Executive Director  
Ron Shultz, Policy Director  
Debbie Becker, Financial Services Manager  
Ray Ledgerwood, Program Coordinator  
Larry Brewer, SE Regional Manager  
Carol Smith, CREP Program Coordinator  
Megan Finkenbinder, Program Specialist

**PARTNERS REPRESENTED DURING THIS MEETING:**

John Larson, Washington Association of Conservation Districts (WACD)  
Harold Crose, Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)  
Don Larsen, Department of Fish & Wildlife (WDFW)  
Rod Hamilton, Farm Services Agency (FSA)

**GUESTS:**

Craig Nelson, Okanogan CD  
Nora Mena, WSDA  
Eric Bair, WSDA  
Jack Willis

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**Consent Agenda**

**Commissioner Brown moved and Commissioner Peters seconded the motion to approve the January 21, 2010 regular Business Meeting minutes and the February 19, 2010 special Meeting minutes. Motion adopted.**

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**Introductions and Partnership Reports**

Rod Hamilton, FSA – This past fall his agency went through a process converting all of their payments to a web base system. There is a new state committee that was appointed in January by farmers that oversee operations, this committee consists of farmers, dairymen and fruit growers.

Commissioner Eriksen – The next commission meeting will be held in the SE Area, currently the four districts involved are working together on preparations.

## **Approved at the May 20, 2010 Commission Meeting**

Commissioner Sprague – He recently spent some time reviewing CRP issues for state lands and thinking of options for lessees. He will report back at a later date to discuss further options and a course of action.

Commissioner Faulconer – Agency is waiting for their budget. An issue currently being worked on is the biological opinion released on pesticide related to salmon. This could have a large impact on Agriculture.

Commissioner Colvin – Reported that Conservation Districts are very concerned about budget.

Commissioner Bahrych – Mentioned the editorial in the Seattle Times written by CD voters on the King Election. This was a mixed editorial and the author was unaware of the Commission's Election Manual. Commissioner Bahrych contacted him and let him know there is a manual available.

Mark Clark, SCC Staff – Recently flew to Kansas City to give a report as NASCA President for about 800. He was able to visit with the Chief and feels there is a definite culture change.

Commissioner Herron – WACD recently held their legislative days which was a success. They had a great turnout from CD's. In April, WACD will hold a strategic meeting with the PMC as well as a 2010 Convention planning meeting.

Commissioner Peters – The tribes are currently doing a lot of work legislatively. The staff at the NWIFC received direction that they were unable to testify unless they receive resolutions from the tribal council. They are currently working on a new marine sanctuary dealing with marine areas being set aside to bring back certain species.

Commissioner Winder – WSU is eagerly awaiting word on the budget. The senate budget is about a \$13.5 million reduction where the house is substantially less. He reported that a new research facility is being designed to deal with stormwater issues, very excited about this.

Commissioner Baldi – The budget is a high priority for Ecology. They are also working on securing \$4 million in drought funding. Was involved in a discussion surround ECY's proposed draft water quality manual. There is still a proposed cleanwater act for 2010 focused on a raising states hazardous substance tax which was approved by voters in 1988.

John Larson, WACD – WACD held a very successful legislative days, budget was the main focal point. Some other points of interest are Supervisor Elections and making sure folks are engaged. Keeping an eye on public information requests which are becoming a burden on a few CD's and have the potential to affect all 47.

Don Larsen, WDFW – Reported that there are changes in leadership at the Department of Fish and Wildlife.

### **Review of 09-11 Supplemental Budget and preview of 11-13 Budget**

Ron Shultz, SCC Staff, gave a presentation on the current and supplemental budget status which included an overview of the Commission budget reductions for the 09-11 biennium, and WSCC agency budget proposals by the House, Senate and Governor. An overview of the 11-13 Biennial Budget was also given which included an economic forecast and outlook, the estimated budget deficit for the 11-13 biennium as well as political factors.

**Commissioner Colvin moved that the Commission allocate funding for FY 11 to districts based on the proportional percentage reduction of the state's budget, Commissioner Eriksen seconded.**

**Motion adopted.**

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### **District Budget Request & State Funding Allocation Reference Paper and Templates**

Ray Ledgerwood, SCC Staff reviewed the templates for the 11-13 biennium district budget requests. A benchmarks and timetable summary document was reviewed and discussed including the importance to complete the district budget requests summaries before May 15, 2010 in order to sequence the important budget submittal deadlines for the new biennium.

**Commissioner Brown moved that we send out the budget information to districts within two days to give the districts an opportunity to review the material and allow the Commission to adhere to the schedule. Commissioner Baldi seconded.**

**Motion adopted.**

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### **Resource Assessment**

Harold Crose, NRCS, gave a presentation on the importance of resource assessments at the conservation district level that can be utilized in long range planning, prioritizing of projects, funding, and staffing, opportunities to attract more funding, and have an influence on programs and policies. Harold demonstrated the use of geographic information layers to identify conservation needs, resource conditions, and trends.

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### **Program/Field Operations**

**Districts in Good Standing Subcommittee** – Stu Trefry, SCC staff presented the process and memo which will be sent out to districts on how the Good Standing Checklist will be utilized over the next year. The goal of commission staff will be to use this checklist to ensure all 47 districts are in "Good Standing" by May, 2011.

**Commissioner Colvin moved and Commissioner Herron seconded to approve the Good Standing Checklist process outlined by the Draft memorandum to districts including the following revisions to the Tier 3 & 4 designations:**

- **Tier 3 – Two category 2 elements need improvement**

- **Tier 4 – One or more category 1 elements and/or three or more category 2 elements need improvement**

**Motion adopted.**

**CREP Update** – Carol Smith, SCC staff gave a presentation on the status of the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP). This included the number of contracts, stream miles, and acres of buffer as well as effectiveness of the buffers. The program has been performing well with continued growth and functional buffers. The next two years should bring a greater increase in contracts with the advent of new practices.

**Adams CD Update** – Mark Clark, SCC staff explained that recently a group of folks attended an Adams CD meeting. The district has contracted with a CPA.

**WSDA Dairy Program Update** – Nora Mena, WSDA, gave a presentation on the Washington State Department of Agriculture's Dairy Inspection and Compliance program.

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**Legal/Technical Services**

**North & South Yakima Conservation District Boundary clarification – Commissioner Brown moved to approve the North & South Yakima Conservation District boundary changes. Commissioner Eriksen seconded.**

**Motion adopted.**

**Eastern Klickitat CD application for appointment – Commissioner Brown moved to appoint Rhon Raschko to the Eastern Klickitat Conservation District Board of Supervisors. Commissioner Colvin seconded.**

**Motion adopted.**

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**Policy & Intergovernmental**

**ECY BMP Manual Update** – Ron Shultz, SCC staff briefed the commission on the current status of the discussions on Ecology's proposed livestock grazing manual. Currently, the Commission is facilitating a process called Agriculture and Water Quality that will examine the relationship between the proposed manual and the NRCS FOTG, the existing MOA between Ecology, districts and the Commission, and local processes to implement landowner incentive outreach.

**Water/Drought Forecast** – Ron Shultz, SCC staff briefed the commission on the current status of the recent snow pack and stream flow estimates which suggest we may experience a drought in several areas of the state.

**Legislative Update** – Ron Shultz, SCC staff gave a quick overview of the recent session on a few key bills other than budget. Agriculture Impact Statement: Passed Senate, failed to pass the House Capital Budget committee. Incentives and WSCC: Passed Senate, did not get a hearing in the House. Food Policy Forum: Passed legislature and now at the Governor.

**Commissioner Brown moved to accept the staff recommendation on the food policy forum legislation to seek a partial veto from the governor, and to let the staff work the food policy issue with other agencies. Commissioner Eriksen seconded.**

**Motion adopted.**

**OFP Update** – OFP recently issued a call for proposals for the RCO Farmland Preservation Grant process. There were 21 proposals received. OFP is also preparing to issue an RFP for local farmland preservation planning grants similar to the grants issued in 2008. There is also an issue around whether WSCC must hold the easement and/or contract.

**Commissioner Eriksen moved to delegate the evaluation and final list of proposals to the executive committee. Commissioner Brown seconded.**

**Motion adopted.**

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**Presentation on October '09 Dust Storm** – Commissioners were given a presentation by Mr. Bill Schillinger, WSU, on the October 2009 dust storm that impacted a large portion of Eastern Washington. The presentation included an overview of the event and identified the differences in best management practices to address the movement of soil during high winds. He explained there is a collaborative effort underway to develop a prototype of an improved piece of conventional seed equipment.

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### **Public Comment**

Craig Nelson, Okanogan CD informed Commissioners he had met with his legislator who set up a meeting with L&I to discuss electrical permits for stockwater.

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### **Regional Manager Report**

Commissioners were provided a report on the work of each Regional Manager.

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### **Commission Operations**

**2009 Annual Report** – Mark Clark, SCC staff informed Commissioners that the 2009 Annual Reports were complete and had been mailed out to all district staff and supervisors.

**Commissioner Colvin moved and Commissioner Peters seconded to have SCC staff develop and send a Thank You letter to Sharonne O'Shea, Assistant Attorney General.**

**Motion adopted**

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### **Adjournment**

Commissioner Bahrych adjourned the meeting at 4:15 p.m.